



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Intimidation of Journalists in Kyrgyzstan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 12, 2009

The United States notes with grave concern the news from Kyrgyzstan that threats and violence against journalists persist.

On November 1st, Kubanychbek Zholdoshev, a reporter for the government weekly Osh Shamy, was attacked and beaten by three assailants leaving him with a concussion and broken ribs. In the days prior to this attack, Zholdoshev reportedly faced intimidation as well, and was threatened following publication of a story on the quality of education and corruption at the university.

The attack on Mr. Zholdoshev represents the seventh assault on journalists in Kyrgyzstan this year, one of which resulted in death. We call upon the leaders of Kyrgyzstan's government to denounce publicly and strongly such attacks upon the media.

We are reminded of the statement made in this hall only two weeks ago by the Representative on Media Freedom Miklos Haraszti, who when speaking about Kyrgyzstan said that a "crime as usual-approach" will not suffice to fight violence against journalists. We call upon Kyrgyzstan to recognize the gravity of the challenge being posed to freedom of the media and to restore an intimidation-free atmosphere for public discourse by aggressively pursuing those responsible for these cowardly acts.

Thank you, Madam Chair.